



WENDY
WALDMAN

The Main
Refrain

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THE MAIN REFRAIN

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In 1976, I recorded my fourth album for Warner Brothers Records. I'd had a pretty good run so far—I was out on the road quite a bit, was building a good fan base and my music was generally well received by the reviewers. My first album, *Love Has Got Me*, had set the stage and a very high bar indeed for subsequent projects, having been dubbed the "Singer Songwriter Debut of the Year" in *Rolling Stone* as well as having received generous praise from other quarters. In spite of that reaction, I wound up recording the next two albums in different settings than the first—certainly a journey of discovery, and had made some good records. But I still felt, as I'd felt all along, that I needed to go back to the first project, to that original game plan which had worked so well for me, and explore that production style more deeply.

I had been working with Peter Bernstein, a childhood friend, son of composer Elmer Bernstein, who was a close friend of my father Fred Steiner—both composers in Hollywood. Peter and I had an excellent musical partnership for many years, and when it came time to do this fourth project for Warner's it was natural that we should approach Lenny Waronker about having Peter produce the album. We went in and did some trial recordings—"Eagle and The Owl," and "Is He Coming At All," and Lenny was pleased. We then set about making what was the most ambitious record of my Warner Brothers years, in terms of scope and production values.

We assembled a dream team of musicians and singers, some old friends and some new, all wonderfully gifted. We had Kenny Edwards, Andrew Gold, Waddy Wachtel, Steve Cropper, Taj Mahal, Jim Horn, Don Menza, Milt Holland, Linda Ronstadt, Karla Bonoff, Michael Botts, David Foster, Victor Feldman and Chuck Findley as well as Steve Ferguson, David

Kemper, a few other great sidemen, and a superb string section conducted by David Campbell. It was a marvelous group of people, and we were very fortunate to get to work with all of them. In so many ways Peter was a musical soulmate of mine, and he had a great instinct about what needed to happen on this project. We had always had a fairly easy time collaborating, and this was, without a doubt, our greatest collaboration. Michael Boshears recorded and mixed this record, also our fourth together. We had a great time doing this one, and it was extremely well received. We got a great deal of airplay on numerous tracks. Certainly if one's heart and soul can truly be captured in a recording, ours were deeply entwined in this one, and I can still hear that today.

Eagle and the Owl—this song came straight out of my "living in Topanga Canyon" days, and was a cryptic story about some characters I knew up there. The imagery is taken somewhat from Native American mythology, but it's a song about people connecting to each other. Much airplay. As the song credits say, I call myself the Eagle, and call Linda the Owl, because it sounded like that when we sang together. We were definitely **HOWLING** on that one.

The Main Refrain—Title track of this album, "The Main Refrain" was a metaphor for the unchanging spirit in all of us—like some kind of music that keeps on playing inside us and everywhere. It's an urban shuffle, very sophisticated in its own way, and we had a stunning horn arrangement for it. Backgrounds courtesy of a dream section: Linda Ronstadt, Karla Bonoff, Kenny Edwards, Andrew Gold and me too. This was played a lot on radio.

Soft and Low—I recall that I wrote this song after we'd begun recording—that happens occasionally, when you become inspired by what is going on and you

have to write **ONE MORE**. Well, it's clear from the song that this was an observation about a relationship. I don't think I foresaw a good outcome to that one, at least that's what the song indicates. Very cool, strange music, some great weirdness from Andrew Gold.

Is He Coming at All—Lots of airplay on this one. Really as a song, it was just a simple question and nothing more. One of the "little songs" I like to write. People could see all kinds of things in this song and that's what I wanted.

West Coast Blues—a total blast—a simple, fun, and funky song with a killer band, highlighted by the great Steve Cropper, and backgrounds by Taj Mahal, Kenny Edwards, Linda Ronstadt and myself. I had wondered what the four of us would sound like singing together, and it was incredible. To my knowledge, that's the only recording in captivity of these particular four voices together. As my fans know, I love to put voices together, and this album was the greatest opportunity I've ever had to do that.

Goodbye Summerwind—This got played a lot all over the country. It's a cryptic little song, that reflects my own ambiguity—I was on the road a lot in those days, and didn't really know what to do with relationships. I guess I thought the "Summerwind" which carried me everywhere might hold the key. Absolutely brilliant playing on the part of my friend Jim Horn, the great horn player, one of my heroes. Also, backgrounds by Ronstadt, Bonoff and myself, another interesting vocal combination.

Prayer for You—This is a fine song, indeed a sad one, straight out of my life. Also a fine arrangement that let the song be itself. Particularly proud of the lyrics...

The Frenchman—I love this song and I love this track. This was a little song for a man exactly as described in the song—a remarkable character actually,

who really did lose his hand in war. I liked him through his gruffness, which was considerable. I heard however, that when it was played for him, he cried. One of the most interesting recordings I've ever done, it was written on dulcimer. But it turned into several dulcimer tracks, all tuned differently. Then with the percussion, the accordion, the synth and Steve Ferguson's stunning mandochord part, it really became the first true "world music" track I'd ever done. I also layered my background vocals as I did the dulcimers, to make some very wild chords indeed. Those in themselves reflect the spirit of the song.

Living is Good—A simple piano song of celebration—superb playing from Kenny Edwards, Andrew Gold and Jai Winding, and the fun of having Kenny and Andrew doing the background vocals, a sound I happen to love very much.

Back By Fall—This is one of my finest songs ever, definitely in my "top ten best things I got to write," and certainly a powerful record. Peter on upright bass, David Foster on piano, Michael Botts on drums and Victor Feldman on vibes. This song is about leaving your own comfort to go help others in need. And all we musicians can do is take our guitars off the wall, go and sing, and hope that in that way, we can help heal people and make the world a little better.

—Wendy Waldman, 2005

**SIDE ONE**

Eagle and the Owl
The Main Refrain
Soft and Low
Is He Coming at All
West Coast Blues

SIDE TWO

Goodbye Summerwind
Prayer for You
The Frenchman
Living Is Good
Back by Fall

All selections written by Wendy Waldman
PRODUCED BY PETER BERNSTEIN

EAGLE AND THE OWL

David Kemper/drums; Ken Edwards/bass; Andrew Gold/acoustic & slide guitar; Waddy Wachtel/electric guitar; Wendy Waldman/acoustic guitar; Eagle/Wendy Waldman; Owl/Linda Ronstadt

THE MAIN REFRAIN

Michael Botts/drums; Ken Edwards/bass; Andrew Gold/piano; Waddy Wachtel/electric guitar; Linda Ronstadt; Karla Bonoff; Wendy Waldman; Ken Edwards; Andrew Gold/vocals

SOFT AND LOW

Michael Botts/drums; Ken Edwards/bass & electric guitar; Wendy Waldman/piano; Andrew Gold/clavinet; Nick DeCaro/acordion

IS HE COMING AT ALL

David Kemper/drums; Ken Edwards/bass; Wendy Waldman/acoustic guitar & vocals; Waddy Wachtel/electric guitar; Andrew Gold/electric piano & percussion

WEST COAST BLUES

David Kemper/drums; Peter Bernstein/bass; David Foster/piano & clavinet; Waddy Wachtel/electric guitar (1st solo); Steve Cropper/electric guitar (2nd solo); King Erison/percussion; Linda Ronstadt; Wendy Waldman; Taj Mahal; Ken Edwards/vocals

GOODBYE SUMMERWIND

Michael Botts/drums; Ken Edwards/bass; David Foster/piano; Andrew Gold/electric piano & electric guitar; Waddy Wachtel/electric guitar; Jim Horn/recorder; King Erison/percussion; Linda Ronstadt; Karla Bonoff; Wendy Waldman/vocals

PRAYER FOR YOU

Michael Botts/drums; Ken Edwards/bass; Wendy Waldman/acoustic guitar & vocals; Waddy Wachtel/electric guitar; Milt Holland/congas; Victor Feldman/vibes

THE FRENCHMAN

Milt Holland/percussion; Wendy Waldman/dulcimer, synthesizer & vocals; Nick DeCaro/acordion; Steve Ferguson/mandocello

LIVING IS GOOD

Michael Botts/drums; Ken Edwards/bass; Wendy Waldman/piano; Jai Winding/organ; Andrew Gold/electric guitar; Wendy Waldman; Ken Edwards; Andrew Gold/vocals

BACK BY FALL

Michael Botts/drums; Peter Bernstein/bass; David Foster/piano; Victor Feldman/vibes

Horn/Jim Horn; Chuck Findley; Don Menza; Jay Migliori; Strings/Charles Yael; Karla Bonoff; Sheldon Simeon; Robert Dubow; Lya Stem; Selene Huford; Dennis Carmazy; Ronald Strauss; Pamela Goldsmith; Paul Polynick; conducted by David Campbell
Arrangements/Wendy Waldman and Peter Bernstein
Arrangement on "Is He Coming at All"/David Campbell

Recorded and mixed by Michael Bohears
Recorded at Indigo Ranch, MD, and Cherokee Recording Studios, May-July 1976

Mixed at Cherokee using the Aphex Aural Exciter

Assistant Engineer: Steve Brandon

Mastered at A&M by Bernie Grundman

Art Direction/Photography by Ed Thrasher

Design by Lockart

Special thanks to Lenny Waronker for his production guidance
Special thanks also to Clyde Bakkeno, Bob Repple, and Warner Brothers for their continual encouragement

Linda Ronstadt and Andrew Gold appear courtesy of Asylum Records

Steve Cropper appears courtesy of Elektra Records

King Erison appears courtesy of Westbound Records, Inc.

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